

County Profile: Salem

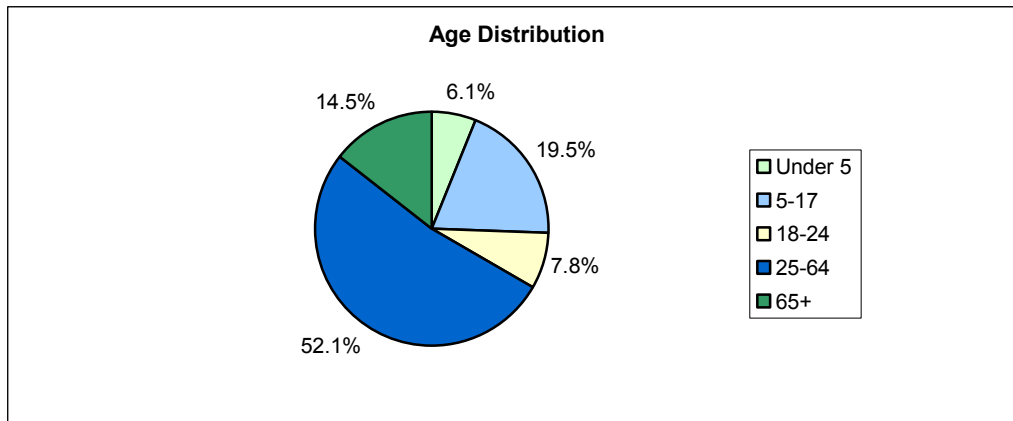


General Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 64,285 individuals reside in Salem County's 15 municipalities. These individuals are spread out over a land area of 337.88 square miles, which translates into a population density of 190.3 persons per square mile. Salem County is the least populous of the state's 21 counties.

At -1.5%, Salem County was the only county to experience a population decrease from 1990 to 2000. However, while ten of the 15 municipalities experienced reductions in their population, five gained population over the decade. Pilesgrove Township (total 2000 population – 3,923) experienced the greatest percentage growth, 20.7%, from 1990 to 2000. Nearly half of the population (46.3%) of this primarily rural county is concentrated in three townships – Carneys Point, Pittsgrove and Pennsville.

Salem County has 16,450 children under the age of 18. They comprise 25.6% of the county's total population and .8% of the state's child population. Approximately 59% of Salem County residents are of working age (18 through 64), and 14.5% are 65 years and older. Compared to statewide figures, Salem County has slightly larger percentages of residents who are under the age of 18, and who are 65 years and older.



Child Welfare

Salem County's portion of statewide child abuse and neglect referrals is greater than the proportion of children residing in the county. Just .8% of all children in New Jersey reside in Salem County; however 1.4% or 523 of all child abuse and neglect referrals

are generated there. The patterns of abuse and neglect tend to be similar to the statewide patterns.

Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals in 2001

	Salem County		New Jersey	
	N	%	N	%
Physical Abuse	172	32.9	12,382	32.0
Emotional Abuse	3	0.6	330	0.9
Sexual	24	4.6	2,179	5.6
Neglect	308	58.9	22,099	57.1
Multiple Types	16	3.1	1,716	4.4
<i>Total</i>	523	---	38,706	---
Substantiated Rate Per 1,000 Children	9.4	---	4.0	---
Percent Substantiated	29.4	---	21.8	---

In the Salem County District Office, the active DYFS caseload is 862 children and 443 families. There are 65 in-state foster homes in Salem County. There are 134 Salem County children in foster care, which is 1.7% of the 7,807 children in foster care in New Jersey and greater than the percentage of children residing in this county. Of the Salem County children in foster care, 62.7% reside in a different county than their family, which is the highest of any county in the state and well above the out-of-county statewide average of 44.6%.

From 1998 to 2002, three children in Salem County died as a result of abuse and neglect out of a statewide total of 123. One of the families of these children had an open/active case with DYFS at the time of their death. One had a closed DYFS case and one had been unknown to DYFS. The number of all infants who died in Salem County in 2000 was five, .7% of the 723 infant deaths occurring in the state. The infant mortality rate of 6.2 deaths under the age of 1 per 1,000 live births was virtually equal to the statewide rate of 6.3.¹

Child Welfare Outcome Measures

Information on various child welfare outcomes for Salem County is presented in the following table.² Salem County does better in comparison to the national standard in one area, the incidence of abuse and/or neglect in foster care. Compared to a national standard of 86.7%, 88.1% of Salem children who have been in placement no more than twelve months, have no more than two placements within that time period.

In other areas, Salem County does not meet the national standards for child welfare outcomes. Particularly striking is the percentage of children who are reunified with

¹ The Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health and Senior Services notes that rates based on fewer than 20 deaths should be interpreted with caution.

² See definitions that follow for detailed descriptions of the categories presented in this table.

parents or caregivers within twelve months of discharge from foster care. At 46.9%, Salem County is the second lowest in the state and substantially lower than the national standard of 76.2%. The percentage of child abuse and neglect cases in which there is a recurrence of abuse and/or neglect within six months is 14.1%, the third highest in the state, and substantially higher than the national standard of 6.1%. The percentage of cases of children exiting foster care who re-enter care within 12 months of a previous episode is also higher than the national standard (10.4% compared to a national standard of 8.6%). In addition, compared to the national standard, a smaller percentage of Salem foster children in care for less than 12 months had no more than two placements during that time period (82.4% compared to a national standard of 86.7%). No children exited foster care for adoption within 24 months compared to a national standard of 32%.

2001 Child Welfare Outcome Measures by County

	Salem	State	National Standard
Recurrence of maltreatment	14.1%	6.5%	6.1% or less
A/N Incidence in foster care	.40%	1.3%	.57% or less
Re-unify within 12 months without increasing re-entry	46.9%	60.3%	76.2% or more
Re-enter care within 12 months	10.4%	9.8%	8.6% or less
Reduce time in foster care to adoption	0.0%	15.8%	32.0% or more
Increase placement stability	82.4%	85.2%	86.7% or more

Note. Data supplied by DYFS

Definitions

Reduce recurrence of maltreatment – of children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first six months of the reporting period, the percentage who had another substantiated or indicated report within a six-month period.

A/N incidence in foster care – of children who were in foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that was the subject of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member.

Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry – of children reunified with parents or caretakers at time of discharge from foster care, the percentage reunified within 12 months.

Re-enter care within 12 months – of children who entered foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that re-entered care within 12 months of leaving foster care episode.

Reduce time in foster care to adoption – of all children who exited foster care to adoption, the percentage who exited within 24 months.

Increase placement stability – of all children who had been in foster care less than 12 months, the percentage who had no more than two placement settings during that time period.

Data Sources

DYFS Approved Foster Homes File, 8/4/03
DYFS Caseload Activity Report (DAR-SISM-5), 8/1/03
DYFS, Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2000
DYFS Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2001
DYFS Foster Care File Extract, 6/6/03
DYFS Statewide Summary of Foster Homes (DAR-PCISM-1), 7/4/03
NJ Substantiated Abuse and Neglect Child Fatality Analysis for 1998-2002, July 2003
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Redistricting Data Summary File, Population for the Counties and Municipalities in New Jersey: 1990 and 2000 (PL1)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Age and Sex (GCT-P5)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Population, Housing Units, Area and Density (GCT-PH1-R)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Quick Table, QT-P2.
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Demographic Profiles, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics (DP-1)

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